

**County of Kauai Annual Report 2003-2004**  
**Office of Economic Development**  
**AGRICULTURE**

**Program Description**

The program consists of an Economic Development Specialist and a \$77,500 budget for support of diversified agriculture efforts. The specialist also has non-agriculture responsibilities. OED maintains and schedule of meetings with the county's various agriculture groups such as the Kaua'i County Farm Bureau, East Kaua'i Water User's Cooperative, Hawai'i Tropical Flower & Foliage Association, Kauai Chapter, Kauai Taro Growers' Association and Kaua'i Cattlemen's association and others as needed. The specialist has been a member of the state's papaya federal marketing order and serves, when delegated, on other state bodies such as the Aqua-culture Development Committee and Hawai'i Invasive Species Committee and East & West Kaua'i Soil and Water Conservation District Working Committee. The work entails a major component of networking to match agricultural needs in the county with opportunities represented by state, federal and educational agencies. The office also assists the groups on legislative matters of mutual interest with the county and provides input for matters of county legislative interest.

**Program Highlights**

The recent focus of the program has been to work with farm groups moving on to the lands vacated by the sugar industry- to provide export opportunities by re-opening the Kaua'i Tropical Fruit Disinfestation Facility, to stabilize the decline of plantation irrigation infrastructure and promote expansion of the cattle industry which has taken up a good deal of vacant land. The specialist frequently becomes involved in planning and implementation of events such as the Kaua'i County Farm Bureau Fair, various University events, and sits as an ex-officio advisory member of several boards. The Kaua'i Agriculture Advisory Committee, a body recommended by the Kaua'i Agriculture Master Plan, has been re-activated and conducts monthly meetings with agendas focused on County of Kauai agricultural initiatives.

The county was active in the formation, with the Farm Bureau, of the East Kaua'i Water Users' Cooperative (EKWUC) and assisted them with organizational funding and targeted funding to obtain licenses to operate the East Kaua'i systems.

The EKWUC is seeking permits to manage approximately 4,000 acres of state ag land between Wailua and Case's holdings at Hanamaulu. OED assists in this effort. The 2004 grant has been utilized to repair infrastructure allowing communication between the EKWUC's Wailua and Kalepa segments to support lessees of State owned lands at Kalepa.

In 2004 the county assisted the Kaua'i Cattlemen's Association with a grant to establish a marshalling and weighing station for joint shipment of cattle. This procedure of combining cattle from multiple producers has been conducted at the dock- now problematic with increased cruise volume and general congestion at Nawiliwili. The facility is being constructed inland on Puhi lands furnished by Grove Farm.

The plan to reactivate the Kaua'i Tropical Fruit Disinfestation facility is making slow progress though the legal issues entailed in transferring the master lease from the University of Hawai'i, which owns the facility, to the Agriculture Development Corporation which will assume responsibility for managing the facility for the state and subleasing the property which is essential to exporting papaya and other tropical fruit. We are currently waiting for the state agencies to get the lease done so that the Kaua'i County Farm Bureau can access \$150,000 of state funding appropriated to repair the facility.

Tropical specialty fruit production continues to rise with the exotic fruit such as rambutan, atemoya, etc. reaching mainland markets after expensive irradiation in Hilo. The main Kaua'i production area will lose its chief marketer as a result of a reorganization of a major producer. Marketing will still be handled through the main state cooperative, but there will no longer be a dedicated Kaua'i marketing focus.

Sunshine Market sales are trending flat as a result of increasing competition from private markets as they become established. Overall, the increase in sales is very positive for both the farm community and consumers.

The newly formed Kaua'i Agricultural Tour Operators Alliance, formed with a county grant to the Garden Island RC&D has launched its first joint marketing program via a one year advertising campaign in the Kaua'i Drive Guide and a coupon redemption program to multiple tours. Among the groups involved are Guava Kai, G&R Sugar Tours, Kaua'i Coffee, Na Aina Kai, Haraguchi Rice Mill and others. The intent of the program is to develop cross-selling opportunities and increase visibility of island agriculture attractions.

OED worked over the past year with an expanding group of organizations such as Kaua'i Invasive Species Committee and provides an annual grant to the East and West Kaua'i Soil Conservation Districts to support the committee's work in grading assisting the county with agricultural grading and grubbing exemptions.

With county assistance, the Kaua'i County Farm Bureau and University of Hawai'i CTARH Kaua'i Extension Service revived Agricultural/Environmental Awareness Day during which 1,500 fifth graders participated in a well-structured exposition at the Wailua Research Station.

The Mayor has directed that three initiatives be examined and pursued for potential inclusion in the county's agricultural support program:

- A "deluxe" Sunshine Market with a permanent location and fixed operating hours and expanded product offerings
- A label of origin for use on produce or food products grown or manufactured on Kaua'i for the purpose of marketing locally made products and the destination of Kaua'i
- A solution to structural problems limiting the volume of locally produced beef marketed in Hawai'i, such as a slaughterhouse and packing facility.

Sunshine Market vendors have been surveyed and a limited number are interested in a deluxe market. The label of origin will be tied to the State Department of Agriculture's "Seal of

Quality” Program currently in development to relieve the county of the need to manage a label program, and OED will attempt to secure funding to develop and produce the label. Currently, the people involved lean toward non-county operation of the program. At this time, the cattle industry is expanding and is not yet in a position to address the infrastructural prerequisites for reclaiming a significant portion of the Kaua’i and Hawaii beef market. The industry’s immediate priorities focus on logistical requirements for calf export.

To be successful, these measures will require the buy-in and contribution of numerous partners. OED will continue to take the lead in bringing these partners together in an effort to move the initiatives forward to successful implementation.

### **Program Measures**

	FY 2002	FY 2003	FY 2004
Farm Group Meetings	32	36	36
Agency Coordination	6	4	4
Selected Statistics CY	CYR 2001	CYR 2002	CYR 2003
Papaya Production (000#)	1,455,000	960000	900,000
Sunshine Market (\$000)	431,000	\$431,000	\$444,000
Taro Marketing (\$000)	\$2,000,000	\$2,000,000	\$1,760,000
Sunshine Market Vendor Day	9,700	10,000	10,000